

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is requested.

Claims 1-6 and 9-14 remain in the application. Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate certain of the limitations that had been in claim 2 as well as the limitations that had been in claim 7 and 8. Accordingly, claim 2 has been amended and claims 7 and 8 have been canceled. Independent claim 10 has been amended to incorporate limitations similar to the limitations that were in claim 8. Additionally, all of the claims have been amended to eliminate the numeric references. Numeric references are not required under U.S. patent law and are given no patentable weight. Accordingly, the amendment to eliminate the numeric references is not a narrowing amendment and is not an amendment entered for purposes of patentability.

The original claims were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Uchida et al. The Examiner stated that the Uchida et al. reference substantially discloses the claimed invention except for the locking part being made of rigid material. With respect to claims 5, 6 and 13, the Examiner acknowledged that Uchida et al. does not disclose the housings being made of a cast metal. However, the Examiner concluded that it would be obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to have a rigid material for the lock and cast metal for the housings since it has been held that a worker skilled in the art could select known materials on the basis of suitability for the intended use.

At the outset, it is noted that the rejection is based on 35 USC 102(b). A rejection under Section 102 requires the reference to show each of the limitations recited in the claims. The last three sentences in paragraph 2 of the Detailed Action clearly acknowledge that the Uchida et al. reference does not show all of the features

recited in the original claims. Furthermore, the last sentence of paragraph 2 of the Detailed Action considers whether it would have been obvious for the skilled artisan to revise the teaching of Uchida et al. Hence, the Office Action appears to have acknowledged that the Uchida et al. reference clearly is not an anticipation.

The Office Action states that it would be obvious for the skilled worker to have used a rigid material for the locking part and cast metal for the housing. This conclusion is traversed, with respect, and certainly does not apply to the amended claims.

Uchida et al. shows a unitary sealing member 2 with a sealing part 2a and a lock 7a. The Uchida et al. sealing member 2 presumably is formed from a material selected for desirable sealing characteristics. Thus, the sealing member 2 of Uchida et al. presumably is an elastomer that exhibits sufficient resiliency to seal against adjacent surfaces. However, the elastomeric characteristics that achieve good sealing would result in poor locking characteristics. The Uchida et al. reference has no suggestion of structure that could possibly enhance the locked retention of the sealing member 2 of Uchida et al. in the housing. The unitarily formed Uchida et al. seal 2 conceivably could be formed from a rigid material to achieve more secure locking. However, a rigid seal in Uchida et al. would achieve poor sealing characteristics. Nothing in Uchida et al. suggests how this dichotomy could possibly be resolved.

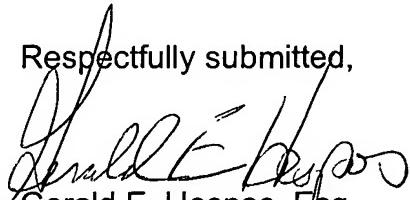
In contrast, to Uchida et al., the loop-shaped sealing member of amended claim 1 has a sealing part formed from an elastomer mounted on the housing and sealed elastically between the housing and the mating housing. The loop-shaped sealing member of amended claim 1 further includes a lock formed from a rigid resin material. The lock includes "a reinforcing portion molded integrally with said sealing

part such that said sealing part and said reinforcing portion of said lock define a continuous matrix of elastomeric and rigid resin materials." The lock further includes "a locking claw unitary with the reinforcing portion and locked to the engaging hole on said housing." The integral molding of the reinforcing portion of the lock with the sealing part achieves "a continuous matrix of rubber and resin materials" that securely positions the lock and the sealing part together, with each part performing its intended function in an optimal manner.

There is no suggestion at all in Uchida et al. of a loop shaped sealing member having an annular sealing part formed from an elastomer and a lock formed from a rigid resin material with a reinforcing portion molded integrally to the sealing part. More particularly, nothing in Uchida et al. would motivate the skilled artisan to make the significant design changes so that these functionally different parts of the Uchida et al. seal 2 could perform optimally for their distinct required functions.

It is submitted that the amended claims remaining in the application are directed to patentable subject matter, and allowance is solicited. The Examiner is urged to contact applicant's attorney at the number below to expedite the prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,



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